

Serial No. 09/756,997

Art Unit: 2822

IN THE CLAIMS

Kindly amend claims 1, 6 and 9 to appear as follows, all without prejudice:

1. (Twice Amended) A method for eliminating polymer blobs in a photoresist mask formed at the surface of a semiconductor wafer, comprising the steps of:

providing a semiconductor wafer having a photoresist layer formed thereon;

exposing, baking and developing the photoresist layer to produce a patterned photoresist mask; and

heating the wafer for a time sufficient to reach a temperature in a 100-140°C range and without cooling it, and then rinsing the wafer with deionized water at a temperature equal to or higher than the room temperature.

6. (Twice Amended) A method for eliminating polymer blobs in a photoresist mask formed at the surface of a semiconductor wafer, comprising the steps of:

providing a semiconductor wafer having a photoresist layer formed thereon;

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exposing, baking and developing the photoresist layer to produce a patterned photoresist mask, and then rinsing the wafer with a rinse consisting essentially of deionized water (DIW) having a temperature in a range of 40-60°C.

9. (Twice Amended) A method for eliminating polymer blobs in a photoresist mask formed at the surface of a semiconductor wafer, comprising the steps of:

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providing a semiconductor wafer having a photoresist layer formed thereon;

exposing, baking and developing the photoresist layer to produce a patterned photoresist mask; and then

submitting the wafer to an extra rinse consisting essentially of deionized water at a temperature in a 40-60°C range.

### REMARKS

Applicant includes proposed changes to Figures 1A-1D per the Examiner's suggestion. A separate Letter to the Official Draftsman is attached.